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ABSTRACT

The Teachers College competency-based program for training educational administrators seeks to create an informed educational leadership that can improve educational situations. This leadership is trained in the use of theories and techniques about the practice of administration in institutional and policy settings. Each student creates a program that includes study in four major subject components--organizational behavior, management science, institutional analysis and action, and policy analysis and action. Sample pages from the department's framework of competencies are included. (Author/IRT)

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THE COMPETENCY-BASED PREPARATION OF ADMINISTRATORS AT TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Dale Mann, T.C., Columbia University

State agencies are notoriously erratic in attending to the advice that academics offer. After years of trying to get across the idea that public school teaching should be competency-based, some policy advisers are now startled to find that the competency-based idea is supposed to apply to administrators and even to the graduate training of administrators. Thus it happens that the New York State Department of Education has mandated that graduate schools stop recommending people for State certification as administrators based on the numbers of courses completed and instead premise that recommendation on the demonstrated ability of a person to enact the competencies which characterize the field practice of administration.

This challenge from the State Department is not much different from that with which practitioners have confronted many professors of educational administration. "Practicing administrators, when they're good, become good amateur psychologists, good amateur economists, good amateur politicians. They recognize that they do not have the time (or the inclination) to master those fields. They learn enough to get along..." (Dale Mann, "What Peculiarities in Education Administration Make It Difficult to Profess: An Essay," The Journal of Educational Administration 13 (May 1975), p. 140). In addition, practitioners are suspicious (and often justifiably so) of the academic or discipline-based prescriptions that universities use to dispense allegedly useful knowledge. Who needs to know about a standard topic of analysis in political science--"the structure of beliefs in a mass public"--when the immediate task is to set up a press conference.

This Department's new curriculum is a response not only to one of our accrediting State agencies but also to a challenge to relate again theory to practice, analysis to action, and professor to practitioners. We seized the opportunity to reorganize all of our curriculum, for all licenses and for all jurisdictions into a single, comprehensive, competency-based plan. We determined early not to build little boxes around the principalship, the assistant principalship, the superintendency, and so on. In our pursuit of a more generic notion, and one that would be more appropriate for a university-based program, we hit on informed leadership as the summative competence of our new program's graduates. Moreover, we defined "leadership" not in terms of maintenance skills but in terms of being able to improve existing situations.

Still how is the leadership role to be buttressed by knowledge? There are 90,000 public elementary and secondary school buildings in the United States, 17,000 public school districts, and 22,000 non-public schools. That means that for the schooling sector alone, there are more than 100,000 nearly idiosyncratic, very demanding institutional contexts for leadership. And, as administrators progress through a number of jobs--e.g., from program analyst to program director to agency chief--the component tasks change along with the context. The increasing recognition of the family-as-educator, and the media-as-educator places new demands on leadership. Most educational leaders must negotiate all of these changes (site, task, and technology) simultaneously and virtually continuously. How then can the leadership role be buttressed by knowledge?

Our answer lay in basing the practice of leadership in theory. Theories are nothing more or less than constructs which explain. Their explanatory

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property makes them especially useful for leadership and their basis in knowledge makes them the particular responsibility of universities. Facility with theories of practice (and with their associated techniques) is thus the most generic and powerful competency which a graduate program can provide.

Program Structure

Leadership is supported by two areas of analysis that are fundamental to all of administration--organizational behavior and management science. Organizational Behavior is based on the social and behavioral sciences (e.g., political science, anthropology, sociology, etc.), as those disciplines may be applied to the tasks of administration. Management Science deals with the often quantified aspects of formal systems for calculation and control within organizations (e.g., operations research, school business administration, the study and control of resource allocation).

Regardless of how complete an individual's grasp of theory or technique may be, unless that knowledge is applied it falls short of our purposes. Thus, we also stress the areas of application in leadership, the first of which is Institutional Analysis and Action. By focusing on informed leadership in institutional settings, this Department rededicated itself to the preparation of outstanding individuals able to administer and to improve schools. The practice of the largest group of administrators--principals, assistant principals, deans, grade level and team supervisors--goes on in school buildings. The visibility of their decisions, the immediate nature of their contact with teachers, the proximity to students, the responsibility for curriculum determination combine to make the leadership of schooling institutions challenging, rewarding, and distinct.

Our fourth area of emphasis is Policy Analysis and Action. In all sectors of public and private endeavor, the demands of service-delivery and of policy are characteristically different. As compared to school building leadership, different skills, different habits of inquiry, different concerns, and different methods of work characterize the superintendency, headquarters staff work, and positions of responsibility in education-related city, county, state and federal agencies and in private foundations, consulting firms, and educators' associations. The growing importance of this sector compelled our attention to it. Students who successfully complete the Department's program will be in a strong position to exercise leadership through the medium of policy research, analysis, and administration.

The major components of the Department's competency-based program can be presented as follows:

ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR	MANAGEMENT SCIENCE
INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS AND ACTION	POLICY ANALYSIS AND ACTION

It is an ambitious agenda for teaching and learning. Our commitment to it is signalled in part by the requirement that every student be competent in every area.

Policy analysis cannot be done well in isolation from the institutional setting. One cannot specialize in organizational behavior to the exclusion of management science. All students must be prepared in all areas.

With the summary competence identified and with the major supporting areas of study blocked out, we turned to the hard question...what does this mean for our existing teaching and learning? We knew that we did not believe in a micro-behavioral or a mini-task approach that would reduce competencies to near senseless bits. Neither the state of knowledge nor the synthesizing act of leadership would support such a conceptualization. Instead we set out major components of the leadership task under each of the four major rubrics. The Department's competency array specifies all of the major tasks or functions of administration if those functions can be approached analytically. Some administrative behaviors are not very susceptible to analysis (charisma, for example): others are important but beyond the current reach of the social and behavioral sciences (e.g., "intuitive" judgments). Each competency is matched by a course through which a student may develop that competency. In addition, for the guidance of students who may already have had a related course at another institution or who may not be able to take a specific course, every competency is matched with a citation of the major supporting empirical source (see the "Selected Reading" column). Sample pages drawn from each of the Department's four areas are presented on the following pages. We are committed to developing our students' (and our own) abilities in each of these areas but we make no pretense about the precise recipe of ingredients to be used under each. This is not a lock-step curriculum. There are no magic or mechanical recipes; there will be no mutually exclusive roads to narrow administrative specializations.

The Student's Program

Most students pursue State certification and university degrees at the same time. The requirements for our various degrees remain largely unchanged. But the Department's recommendation to a credentialling agency that an individual be certified as an administrator is determined by successful completion of the competency-based program.

All students prepare an Individual Plan which specifies the position for which the person wishes to prepare; the method for acquiring what subset of competencies (i.e., the mix of course work, reading, and/or field experiences); and a time task line for the acquisiton of the competencies and the demonstration of their mastery.

For the purposes of recommendation by the faculty to a credentialling agency certification as an administrator, an individual must assemble evidence of two sorts in a "Portfolio." First, the results from a battery of four objective or "fact level" proficiency exams; and second, evidence collected in field settings. Students prepare three field-based exercises in three different areas of study. These may be term papers or research projects done in conjunction with course work, but they must be based on field data and must reflect the dictates of actual problems of practice. In the fourth area, the student does a major, extended and intensive clinical project designed as a summary assessment of the individual's competence in a practice or field setting.

When the student's portfolio demonstrates a mastery of the components of informed leadership, it is reviewed by the faculty of the Department. The

Department's judgment is guided by a continuum which specifies the levels of mastery associated with this program (see Figure).

The Network for Administrative Leadership

Educational administration is an applied discipline which cannot adequately be taught, learned, or refined without the insights available from those who practice it in the field. The Department is organizing a number of schools, school districts, and other educating agencies into a network that will provide the field sites for our students' experiences and that will have the benefit of those students' assistance with the tasks of the individual members and institutions. The Department is also instituting an exchange where member institutions and individual students may list the topics they wish to pursue. A district, for example, could express an interest in assistance on a personnel procedures manual, or a transportation scheduling problem. An individual student or a group of students might use the exchange to publicize their availability to work on specified topics. The acceptability of any final arrangements is, of course, the prerogative of both parties.

Program Evaluation

This competency-based program is a substantial departure from past practice and one that incorporates several features new to Teachers College. We want to know how well the program works. Therefore, the President of Teachers College has appointed an External Advisory Board to assist with the evaluation and revision of this program. The advisory board includes representatives of recent graduates from the Department, individuals responsible for institutional leadership, and individuals responsible for policy leadership. Both school and non-school leadership settings are represented in the group. The advisory board has available the services of a specially constituted program evaluation seminar staffed by advanced graduate students.

We seek to develop administrators who will "act like people of thought (and) think like people of action" (Marx). We believe that Teachers College is in an unusually strong position to help its graduates achieve informed leadership. We believe that education, schools, and through them society may be bettered by improving the ability of leaders to deal reflectively and rationally with their responsibilities. Our program is designed not only to help our students conserve the institutions and processes of education, but also to improve them. We want to augment the technical management capabilities of our students with a sense of professional ethics, and with a commitment to the social and philosophical values which have been served by the best of the educational enterprise.

This conceptualization of the role of the educational administrator may be summarized:

WHAT: Informed leadership defined as the ability to improve educational situations;

HOW: through the use of theories and techniques about the practice of administration;

WHERE: in institutional and policy settings.

(For additional information on the program write Dale Mann, Department of Educational Administration, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027).

I. ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR

A. Theory

2. Organizational Psychology

	(COMPETENCY)	(COURSE WORK)	(SELECTED READING)
a.	The student should be able to describe the interface of individual, group, and organizational psychology, and the development of that complex analysis through Freud, Lewis, Myers, Bion, Asch, Sherif, Milgram, Deutsch and Argyris.	TA 5183 Educational Planning: Concerning Techniques, Application TA 5184 Educational Planning and Organizational Behavior	Argyris, Personality and Organization Deutsch and Krauss, Theories of Social Psychology Lewis, Field Theory in Social Science
b.	The student should be able to describe and account for the important psychosocial boundaries within which individuals, groups, and organizations operate. The student should be able to explain the ways in which an organizational structure integrates or opposes task and sentient aspects and show how this might affect (a) organizational task fulfillment and (b) the psychosocial satisfaction of members.	TA 5184 Educational Planning and Organizational Behavior TA 6017 Colloquium in Organizational Behavior	Bion, Experiences in Groups Klein, "Our Adult World and Its Roots in Infancy" Miller and Rice, Systems of Organization Sofer, Organizations in Theory and Practice
c.	The student should be able to analyze the ways in which organizational structures can influence individual and group responsiveness to leadership. The student should also be able to relate individual personality	TA 5020 Behavioral Analysis of Leadership TA 5500 Leadership and Institutional Analysis: Program Evaluation and Staff Development	Bion, Experiences in Groups Levinson, Psychological Man Rice, Learning Through Leadership Verba, Small Groups and Political Behavior

SAMPLE PAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCIES

II. MANAGEMENT SCIENCE

A. Theory

2. Planning Systems

(COMPETENCY)	(COURSE WORK)	(SELECTED READING)
a. The student should be able to specify differences between planning systems and control systems.	TA 5183 Educational Planning: Concepts Techniques, Applications TA 5184 Educational Planning and Organizational Behavior	Anthony, Planning and Control Systems
b. The student should be able to enumerate the purposes, assumptions, and theoretical framework for the building of program budgeting systems.	TA 5183 Educational Planning: Concepts Techniques, Applications TA 5117 Federal Politics, Policies and Administrators	Haggart, et al., Program Budgeting for School District Applications--Concepts, Techniques, Applications
c. The student should be able to specify differences in theoretical frameworks for a number of planning systems such as program budgeting and PERT/CPM, etc.	TA 5183 Educational Planning: Concepts Techniques, Applications TA 5152 Physical Facilities for Education--Analysis of Needs and Program Determination	Johnstone and McNamara, Planning Perspectives for Education Levine, "The Role of Analysis in PPB," Education Resources Managment (Chicago, RC-ASBO 1971)
d. The student should be able to specify the connection between theory in technical planning and theory in organizational behavior particularly in relation to issues of planning system implementation.	TA 5183 Educational Planning: Concepts Techniques, Applications TA 5152 Physical Facilities for Education--Analysis of Needs and Program Determination	Levine, "Planned Change in Organizations," "Accountability and Organizational Diagnosis: Studies of Organizations in Depth," Implementation of Accountability Systems: A Psycho-Social Approach, National Institute of Education
e. The student should be able to specify the theoretical links between concepts of planning,	TA 5183 Educational Planning: Concepts Techniques, Applications	Archibald, "Three Views of the Expert's Role in Policymaking: Systems Analysis, Incrementalism,

SAMPLE PAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCIES

III. INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS AND ACTION

A. Academic Course Work

3. Organizing and Implementing

COMPETENCY)	(COURSE WORK)	(SELECTED READING)
a. Based on the needs analysis and goal developments of the prior two areas, structure the school and its activities. Recognize the organizational implications of a range of pedagogical technologies (e.g., the support requirements of team teaching or open classrooms) and organize and implement educational programs accordingly.	TA 4500 Program Leadership (sequence) TA 5500 Leadership and Institutional Analysis: The Community and the Educational Program	Sergiovanni & Carver, The New School Executive Owens, Behavior in Organization Levine, "Allocating Educational Resources and School Creativity (OECD)
b. Organize and implement innovative programs including new media and new instructional techniques.	TA 5500 Leadership and Institutional Analysis: The Community and the Educational Program TA 6500 Program Leadership: Design and Evaluation	Graubard, Free the Children Sarason, Culture of the School and the Problem of Change
c. Recognize theories of action and select constructs appropriate to organizational circumstances, e.g., open/closed decision routines, various leadership styles (contingency theories, democratic/autocratic, consideration/initiation, etc.), and various participant involvement strategies.	TA 5020 Behavioral Analysis of Leadership TA 5500 Leadership and Institutional Analysis: The Community and the Educational Program	Stogdill, Handbook of Leadership Fiedler and Chemers, Leadership and Effective Management Vroom and Yetton, Leadership and Decision Making

SAMPLE PAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCIES

IV. POLICY ANALYSIS AND ACTION

A. Academic Course Work

3. Organizing and Implementing

(COMPETENCY)	(COURSE WORK)	(SELECTED READING)
a. Understand the interaction between the calculation and control factors in attempting to deliver educational improvement.	TA 3222 Policy Decision-making in Education TA 5117 Federal Politics, Policies and Administrators	Dahl and Lindblom, Politics, Economics and Welfare Mann, Policy Decision-Making in Education
b. Recognize processes of disjointed incrementalism and devise strategies to capitalize on them.	TA 3222 Policy Decision-making in Education TA 5117 Federal Politics, Policies and Administrators	Lindblom, A Strategy of Decision Bailey and Mosher, ESEA Levine, "Educational Policy after Inequality" Teachers College Record, December 1973
c. Recognize the political and administrative features of the innovation process and design ways to maximize public interests in light of those features.	TA 3222 Policy Decision-Making in Education TA 5117 Federal Politics, Policies and Administrators	Mann, et al., The Process of Change (Rand R-1589) Levine, "New Directions in Youth Employment," National Panel on the High School, 1972
d. Identify and accommodate legal dimensions of public policy decisions	TA 4148 Educational Institutions	Reutter and Hamilton, The Law of Public Education (2nd Ed.)

SAMPLE PAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S FRAMEWORK OF COMPETENCIES

Figure. Levels of Mastery*

Application of relevant facts and theories to solution of problems of practice. Creative use, extension, and synthesis of knowledge base applied to a field setting in order to improve that setting. Treatment of elements of knowledge so as to place standard topics in a perspective more usefully related to leadership activities. Independent performance with professional initiative.

(leads to recommendation for certification)

Collection, organization and classification of facts, ideas, etc., into coherent patterns which accurately reflect the professional realities of the competency and are faithful to both analytic and field of practice dictates. Recognition that empirical evidence varies in confidence and validity, and a grasp of criteria for those variations. Generally independent performance with substantial initiative.

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CRITERION THRESHOLD FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT OF ACCEPTABILITY OF PORTFOLIO AS EVIDENCE OF COMPETENCY

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Manipulation of the knowledge base of administrative action in a way that might be acceptable according to solely academic standards but which is not informed by the dictates of responsible action in the field of practice, or vice versa. Closely supervised performance.

Rudimentary organization of elements of information into basic relationships and categories, e.g., causality, correlation, sequences and trends, part-whole relationships, etc.

(entry level skills)

Itemization of facts as disjointed elements; rote recall of aspects of a given competence (e.g., the enumeration of dates, events, persons' names, etc., without associating them in an appropriate context). No initiative or independent performance.

*In an ascending hierarchy.

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